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Anem Syed

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سوہنی مہینوال Mahiwal

SOHNI MAHIWAL

Preserving South Asian
Cultural Heritage
Through Animated Storytelling

By Anem Syed

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts in Visual Communication Design

School of Design | College of Imaging Arts and Sciences
Rochester Institute of Technology

December 7, 2017

ABSTRACT

Sohni Mahiwal: Preserving South Asian Cultural Heritage through Animated Storytelling

By Anem Syed

Majority of Pakistani youth is not enthralled by the country's rich cultural heritage. There is less public knowledge on the subject. This translates into less appreciation or interest. The academic system is largely responsible for this. It imparts a conservative history of undivided India, focuses on politics, ignores its nuanced culture. Unless students venture into specialized fields of art and humanities, most do not get stimulated to study history. Additionally, today when digital learning is on the rise, there is a lack of relevant sources on the subject. This thesis is creating a digital source. It is re-packaging an Indian cultural folk story into a short animation. This may engage the target audience into thinking about their cultural heritage. Furthermore, it aims to interest a global audience.

Sohni Mahiwal is a folk story of the 1800's. Set in Punjab (then in the Indian Subcontinent, and today split between India and Pakistan), it is part of a series of tragic love stories. Poets, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai and Fazal Shah Sayyad were first to document this tale. Ever since it has become part of Pakistani pop culture. This story has been written about in prose and poetry, performed in film and television and has been the subject of paintings. Most recently in 2016, it resurfaced as an immensely popular Coke Studio song.

While this project is documenting one folk story, the general sentiment is to keep the region's vast cultural heritage alive. It is an extraordinary region to study. Over centuries a variety of people made Hindustan their home. They all brought with them their way of life. This movement continued to enrich this region, creating a land of immeasurable diversity. Highlighting this will increase public knowledge on the subject and engender more social discourse.

It is impossible to study, present or preserve the complex Indian heritage in one project of this size and scale. This thesis complements the efforts of relevant organizations and artists. However, its medium is novel. A short digital animation is fitting to spark interest in the younger population. It can be conveniently shared across social media and quickly reach a bigger audience. Comments can generate dialogue. This can lead to further study. In addition, this project can expand into a series of short animations.

Keywords: South Asia, culture, heritage, motion graphics, animation, storytelling

Blog: <https://www.tumblr.com/blog/anemtsyed>

Sohni Mahiwal: Preserving South Asian Cultural Heritage through Animated Storytelling

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INTRODUCTION

PROBLEM STATEMENT

HOW CAN WE PRESERVE SOUTH ASIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ORDER TO LEARN ABOUT OURSELVES, AS A NATION, AS A SOCIETY?

Pakistan is 70 years old. In the grand scope of history, it is not that long. For thousands of years it was part of Hindustan: the era which gave this region its complex history and cultural richness. It was home to the Indus Valley Civilization (around 3000 years ago) whose ancient inhabitants settled around the river Indus (Albinia 2008) (Course, Indus Valley Civilization: Crash Course World History #2 2012). It is the birthplace of Hinduism. It is home to sacred Buddhist sites. It is where Sanskrit literature flourished. It fostered an artistic culture of poetry, music, dance and fine art. For a long period of time, diverse groups of people (Greeks, Turks, Persians, Arabs, Africans, Mughals, British) lived here – merging, growing, evolving – each one culturally enriching the subcontinent (ushistory.org n.d.). Or as Patrick French puts it, the Indian subcontinent is “*a land of infinite variety*” (French 1997).

Pakistani school syllabi do not justify this deep, cultural context; they throw an odd summary here and there. Instead there is a strong focus on political history of the last two centuries. In addition, the government does not officially state that the country is home to many groups with different faiths and traditions (Paracha 2015). The decade of 80's is important in this set up. This is when there was systematic nationwide spread of Islam. Religion was used to dictate society and identify every citizen with respect to it. School history books started being tweaked to identify national identity and patriotism with Islam. Such practices engendered a dangerous trend of superiority of Muslims and hostility towards minorities. This contradicts the region's inherent pluralism. In pre-partition India, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs were prominently interlinked, and despite different religions, were culturally homogenous. So while the Indian partition of 1947 created borders and new identities (Pakistan and India), it was not possible to create a new culture for Pakistan. The “Englishness” left by the British Raj mixed with an Islamic government epoch topped with an anti-India nationalistic identity, created a hodge-podge of a Pakistani culture, especially for millennials.

The four provinces of Pakistan are culturally and linguistically vast. Each province has its unique traditions. This variety is not only refreshing, it hints at the complexities of Indian history. Encouraging dialogue and critical thinking on this subject will help us learn about ourselves, as a nation, as a society. Intelligent conversations on history and culture will not only put South Asian history into perspective but also the history of people on the planet. As Kamil Khan Mumtaz puts, “*Heritage, history, traditions define who we are, where we are, where we are coming from and where we want to go. They define what it means to be human and are the roadmaps, signposts and guides for our journey, our progress and our development towards achieving our goal of realising our highest potentials, our selves. Lose these and you lose the script*” (Ezdi 2016).

This project is encouraging a similar discourse. It picked out an 1800's folk story from Punjab as an allusion to the rich, shared heritage of India/Pakistan. It used design to re-package the folk story into the modern medium of animated storytelling. This preserved it digitally and made it better applicable in today's tech-smart world. It can be uploaded on different video sharing websites (YouTube, Vimeo). It can be viewed on multiple devices. Viewers can further share the animation on all social media across the world in seconds. Therefore, it reaches a bigger, global audience quickly. Any internet buzz around the subject is valuable to stimulating interest in South Asian heritage. Further, this project can evolve into a series of animations preserving various cultural and historical nuggets.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section is divided into three parts:

1. CONTENT

Empires of the Indus - The Story of a River

By Alice Albinia

John Murray Publishers 2009

This book is written by an English journalist. She chronicles her journey across Pakistan along the mighty river Indus. It is fascinating travel literature that reveals the rich history of the subcontinent. She is well researched and low maintenance. She walks in mud, rain, sand, sometimes on foot, some on public transport - exploring, documenting, commenting. She even manages to access the dangerous parts of Pakistan. She follows the path of Alexander on which he invaded the region. She delves into the history of Buddhism and its connection to . She meets many interesting people who provide glimpses into local traditions and customs. The most interesting chapter is on River Saints, religious devotees who settled along the river.

When Europe Loved Islam

By Marya Hannun and Sophie Spaan

May 5, 2016 | Accessed September 25, 2016

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/05/05/when-europe-loved-islam-interwar-weimar-republic-wilmersdorf-mosque/>

This article discusses Islam and Europe in the interwar period – early 20th century: the time westerners were increasingly interested in Islam. They understood it as a progressive, intellectual and modern school of thought. Wilmsdorf mosque in Berlin, which is the center of this article, was built by Muslims migrating from Punjab. This mosque often held philosophical discussions on Islam and many German converted to this religion. While the citizens were fascinated by this exotic eastern religion, the states invested extra in the well-being of its Muslim population largely for strategic military gains. Many Muslims soldiers from modern day Pakistan fought in the British army during the world wars. This article highlights this past as good relations between the west and Muslims. The infamy of Islam today is one major reason influencing the disillusionment of Pakistanis from culture.

The aforementioned article generated a discourse. In the following podcast, the writers Marya Hannun and Sophie Spaan, who are both PhD students in Arabic and Islamic studies, and are historians of the intellectual history of Islam, discuss the political and cultural track of their content. The lesson to take away from this

discussion is the importance of discourse and dialogue. Related to this thesis project, it is important to generate that conversation on south Asian history and culture.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWU8n4OZM30>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKGJmoqWwRs>

Accessed September 25, 2016

H Nisar: Murder of History in Pakistan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9IXZEDYA70>

Accessed September 25, 2016

In this video senior journalist of Pakistan Hassan Nisar discusses the practice of biased history in the country. He mentions the fall of Dhaka and discrimination against Bengalis being glossed over in history. He raises important questions about the corruption of government creating class difference and restlessness among the nation.

The Ancient Indus Valley Civilization 3500 - 1700 BCE

<https://www.harappa.com>

Accessed September 25, 2016

This website comprehensively records the Indus Valley Civilization which is one of the four ancient civilizations of the world. It has images, essays, excavation records and more. It is a compelling history of the advent of society and culture in south Asia, and puts into perspective the evolution of civilization and society of the land that is today Pakistan.

Lok Virsa

<http://lokvirsa.org.pk>

Accessed October 1, 2016

Lok Virsa is a Pakistani national organization working towards cultural and heritage preservation. The name translates to “Folk Heritage”. It has a museum and library and often organizes cultural events.

Citizen Archive of Pakistan

<http://citizenarchive.org>

Accessed October 1, 2016

Citizen Archive Pakistan (CAP) is a non-profit organization associated with several international organizations working towards the same goal of cultural and heritage preservation.

Folk Love Stories of Pakistan

<https://sites.google.com/site/folkstalesofpakistan/sohni-mahiwal>

Accessed September 20, 2016

This website records some of the most popular tragic love stories of the Subcontinent.

Sohni Mahiwal

<https://sites.google.com/site/folkstalesofpakistan/sohni-mahiwal>

Accessed September 20, 2016

Sohni Mahiwal is one of the popular tragic love stories from the province Punjab. Like most folk stories, this passed down generations through the tradition of oral storytelling.

Sohni is the daughter of an earthenware pot maker. They live in a village near River Chenab in Punjab. Sohni grows up painting the pots and masters the art. One day a boy from Uzbekistan named Izzat Baig turns up at her shop and falls in love with her. He never returns home and Sohni's father, who at the time is unaware of Izzat Baig's interest in her daughter, hires him to herd buffalos. Thus getting the name "Mahiwal" which literally means "water buffalo herder". Over time their love flourishes until the family finds out. They arrange for Sohni to marry someone else. Mahiwal is distraught and he moves into a hut across the river from Sohni's new home. At night Sohni swims in her clay pot across the river to meet Mahiwal. One night her sister in law sees this and replaces her pot with an unbaked one. Next night when Sohni crosses the river the pot breaks and dissolves. Mahiwal witnessing this jumps in the river and they both drown.

Paar Chanah Day

Coke Studio 2016

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrPvQvbp3Cg>

Accessed September 20, 2016

This is a recent Coke Studio song inspired by the story of Sohni Mahiwal. It is a dialogue between Sohni and her "ghariya" (clay pot) where the pot is warning her to not cross the river as she will drown in the unbaked

pot. Sohni is bedazzled with love and is adamant on swimming across the river (River Chenab) to meet Mahiwal (her love).

2. TECHNICAL

Animated Storytelling - Simple Steps for Creating Animation & Motion Graphics

By Liz Blazer

Peachpit Press 2016

This book is an easy to follow, step by step guide from pre planning an animation to developing it. It is light hearted in tone and, even though it is instructional, it is fun to read. The writer covers all topics right from creating a narrative, to visualizing it and finally developing it. She pairs all chapters with examples.

The Filmmaker's Eye - Learning (and breaking) the Rules of Cinematic Composition

By Gustavo Mercado

Elsevier Inc. 2011

This book is a guide on effective storytelling through choice of shots. It introduces principles on cinematography and how choice of shots can enhance the narrative.

Design for Motion - Fundamentals and Techniques of Motion Design

Austin Shaw

Taylor & Francis 2016

This book is a comprehensive model on everything motion design. It explains the entire process of creating a motion piece right from mind maps to the final piece. It explains storyboards, style frames, design boards. For each chapter there are corresponding visual references.

3. AESTHETIC

YouTube Channel

Crash Course

This channel creates educational content on everything. In ten minutes or so they provide condensed summaries of particular topics like world history, philosophy, literature, chemistry, physics, games and more. Through most of the video the narrator talks into the camera but each one is paired with a small animation. These were studied as aesthetic and motion references. The videos that are relevant to this research are as follows:

Indus Valley Civilization: Crash Course World History #2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7ndRwqJYDM&index=2&list=PLBDA2E52FB1EF80C9>

Accessed September 25, 2016

The Persians & Greeks: Crash Course World History #5

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-mkVSasZIM&list=PLBDA2E52FB1EF80C9&index=5>

Accessed September 25, 2016

Buddha and Ashoka: Crash Course World History #6

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Nn5uqE3C9w>

Accessed September 25, 2016

The Silk Road and Ancient Trade: Crash Course World History #9

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfe-eNq-Qyg&list=PLBDA2E52FB1EF80C9&index=9>

Accessed September 27, 2016

Alexander the Great and the Situation ... the Great? Crash Course World History #8

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LsrkWDCvxg&index=8&list=PLBDA2E52FB1EF80C9>

Accessed September 30, 2016

Decolonization and Nationalism Triumphant: Crash Course World History #40

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_sGTspaF4Y&list=PLBDA2E52FB1EF80C9&index=40

Accessed September 30, 2016

Islam and Politics: Crash Course World History 216

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ka8csjsmX6I&index=16&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtNjascl-WajpONGX3zoY4M>

Accessed September 30, 2016

The Mughal Empire and Historical Reputation: Crash Course World History #217

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbuM0aJjVgE>

Accessed September 30, 2016

The preceding videos were also used for content providing insight into the long and complex history of South Asia and the influences it absorbed in different time periods.

The Boat

Based on the story by Nam Lee

Accessed October 15, 2016

<http://www.sbs.com.au/theboat/>

This is an interactive graphic novel that was examined for its storytelling technique and style.

PROCESS

The province of Punjab was divided between India and Pakistan in the 1947 partition. Despite the breakup, the culture across borders is synonymous, as it had been before the partition. It is vibrant. It is colorful. People of Punjab are known for their love of food and festivals.

This thesis is an animated story from Punjabi folklore. The story is Sohni Mahiwal, and is a tragic tale of love (Tahir 2016). In the late 18th century Mughal era, a beautiful girl Sohni works with her father baking and painting clay pots. These clay pots are sold at the family run shop. One day an Uzbeki prince is travelling through town. He sees Sohni and is so bedazzled by her beauty that he is unable to leave. He is later hired by Sohni's father to herd his buffaloes. Thus given the name "Mahiwal" which translates to "buffalo herder".

Sohni and Mahiwal fall in love and keep it secret. But not for long. Once their secret is out Sohni's family show severe resentment and force her into marriage with another man. Sohni's new home is next to River Chenab. One day Sohni finds Mahiwal across the river. Impassioned, Sohni swims across the river, clinging on to a claypot to keep her afloat. Her sister in law witnesses this. She is livid. When Sohni's returns, her sister in law secretly replaces the claypot with an unbaked one. Next night when Sohni is swimming to Mahiwal, the claypot dissolves and Sohni drowns. Distraught, Mahiwal jumps into the river and drowns with her. Legend has it that their bodies washed up ashore in Sindh. Today Sohni's tomb is in Shadadpur, Sindh.

Sohni Mahiwal's story has inspired films, songs, poetry, theatre, paintings. Most recently it was performed as a heart wrenching song for Coke Studio Pakistan (Pakistan 2016). Interestingly that song was a collaboration between Indian and Pakistani singers. The story though has never been told in an animation. This thesis project re-packaged this classic story in a modern aesthetic for easier consumption.

NARRATIVE

The story was illustrated in a linear animation using the three act story structure:

1. Problem / Character and conflict
2. Character works towards a solution.
3. Character solves the problem / Resolution

(Blazer 2016)

Since Sohni Mahiwal is a pre-existing story, generating the three act story structure was not challenging. The three acts were identified and highlighted to be included in the final story. Other parts of the story were abridged to fit a short animation: some details and incidents were left out to focus more on the couple and less on supporting characters. This, however, did not take away from the overall narrative.

The characters included in this narrative are:

Sohni (female protagonist)

Mahiwal (male protagonist)

Sohni's Father

Sohni's Husband

Sohni's Sister-in-law

PLOT – A man and a woman fall in love but the woman is forced into marriage with someone else. Impassioned, they continue seeing each other, meeting a tragic end.

STORY BEATS

Beats are parts of a narrative where important events are happening. These are essential in pushing the narrative forward. (Blazer 2016) They create a flow with highs, lows, climax and resolution. The beats in Sohni Mahiwal were identified and laid out to act as references for the next stage: storyboarding.

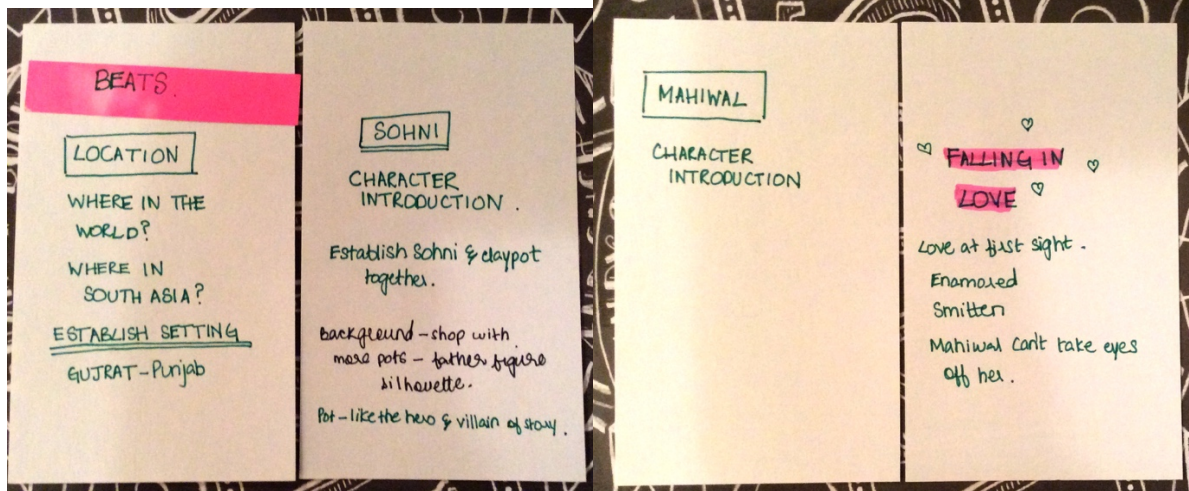


Figure 1

Figure 1.1

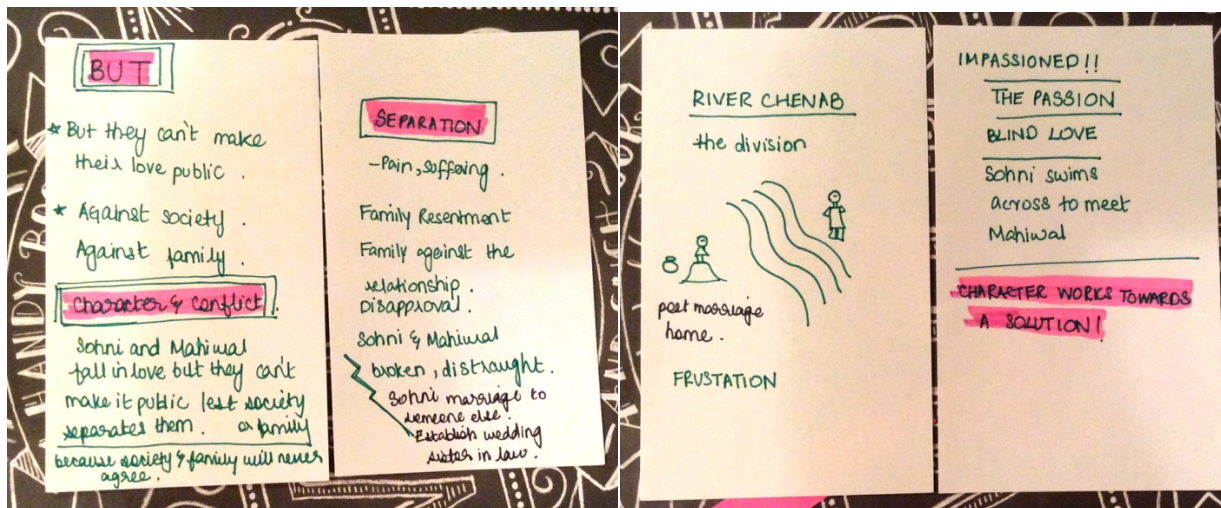


Figure 1.2

Figure 1.3

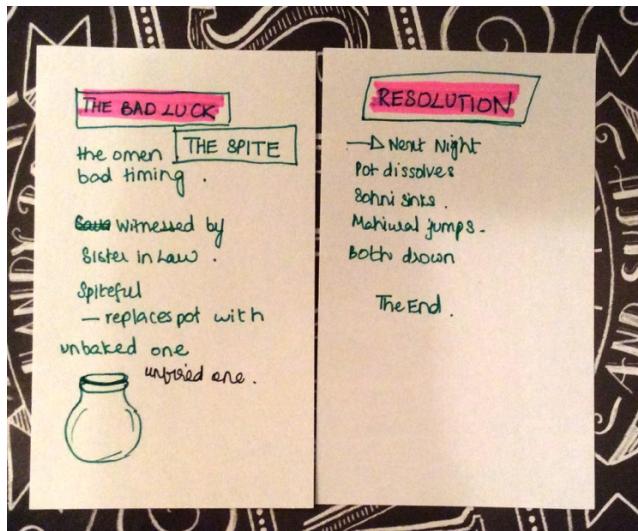


Figure 1.4

STORYBOARD

It is not an uncommon opinion that books / text / scripts lose a chunk of their character when translated into a different language. A big essence of Sohni Mahiwal's story lies in its language which is Punjabi. When translated into English it did not bear the same emotion or character as it did in Punjabi. So it was decided to not have any dialogue or voiceover. While an English voiceover would not have been particularly poetic, a Punjabi one would have limited the audience. As this thesis project was presented to a large international audience, this decision made sense. However, for future dissemination, a Punjabi voiceover could be added for the South Asian audience.

Bearing this in mind the storyboard was drawn to include as many visuals as required for a clear narrative: ensuring no key moment / beat was missed. No voiceover meant there needed to be obvious facial expressions and gestures to register emotions (love, sadness, grief, anger, distress, hope, tragedy).

Following is the first storyboard. This was an early exercise in developing the animation flow. It briefly illustrated how it could play out with what camera movements and compositions, and really plotting those beats visually. Since this was done early on, the visual style (somewhat realistic), was different from the final geometric, abstract style.

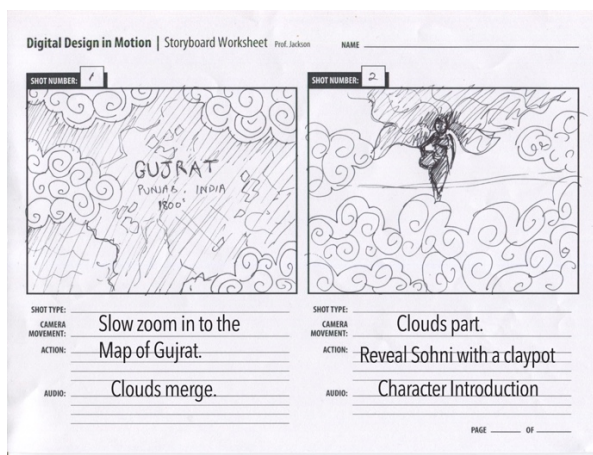


Figure 2

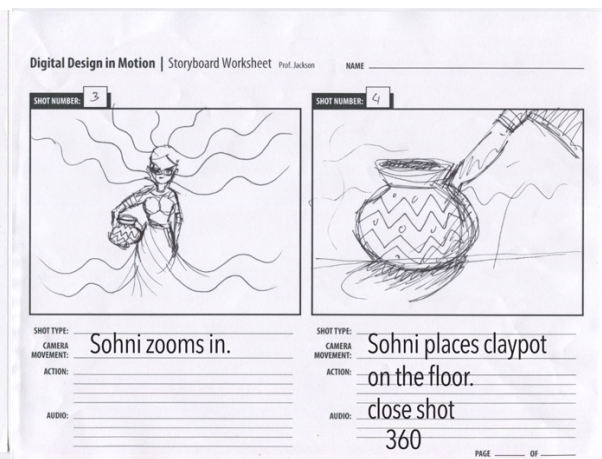


Figure 2.1

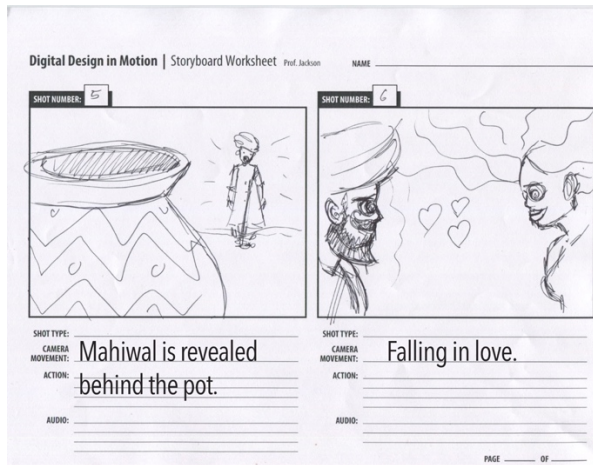


Figure 2.2

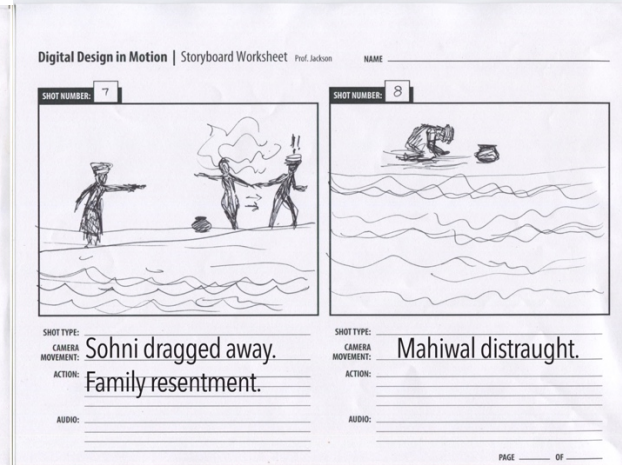


Figure 2.3

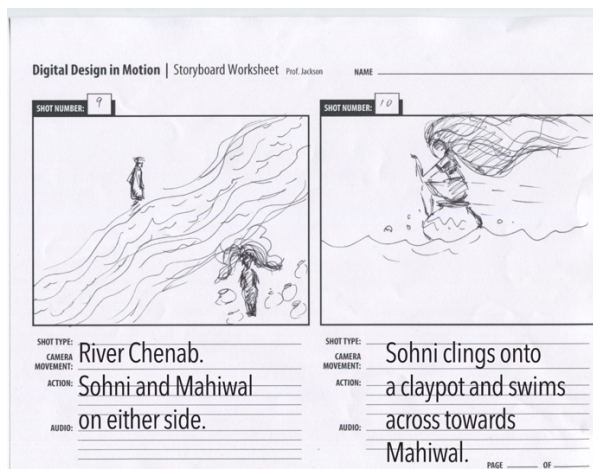


Figure 2.4

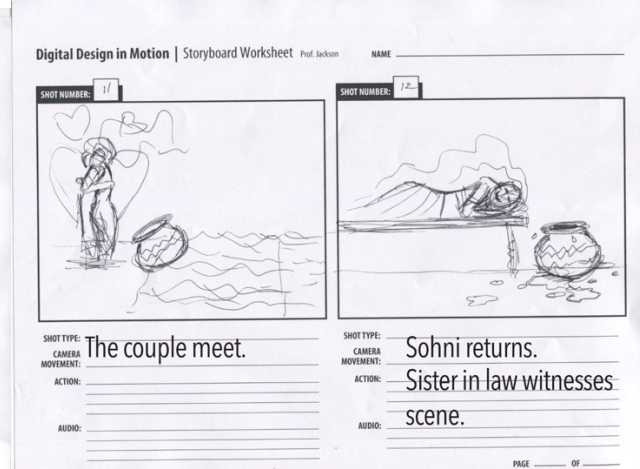


Figure 2.5

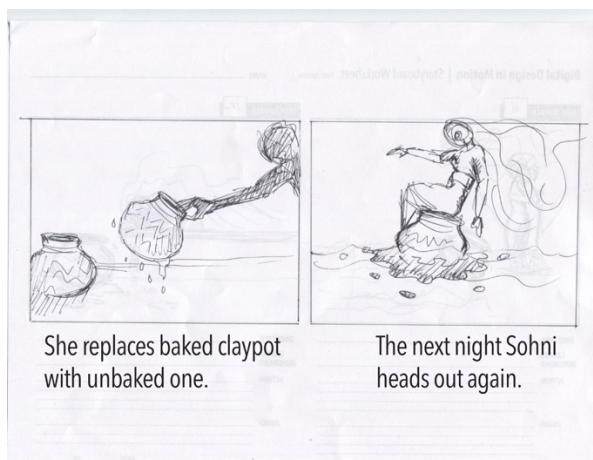


Figure 2.6

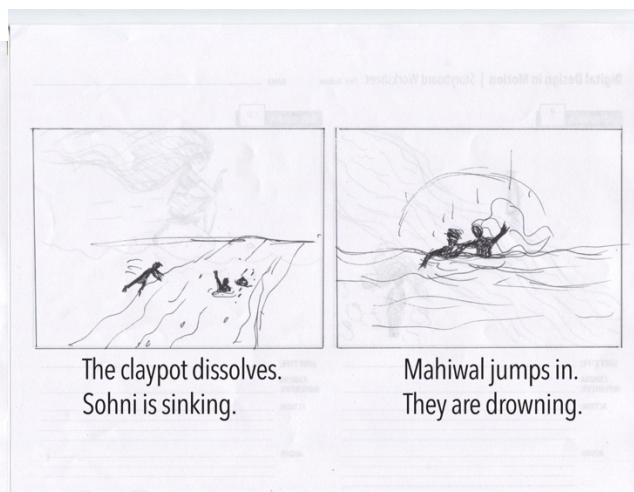


Figure 2.7

Following is the second storyboard. Compared to the first one, this was drawn in the geometric, simplified look – the look this project was aiming for. This storyboard was more detailed and resolved. It proved to be a valuable reference guide for the animation. As the project evolved, some shots from the storyboard were removed and some were added.



Figure 3



Figure 3.1



Figure 3.2

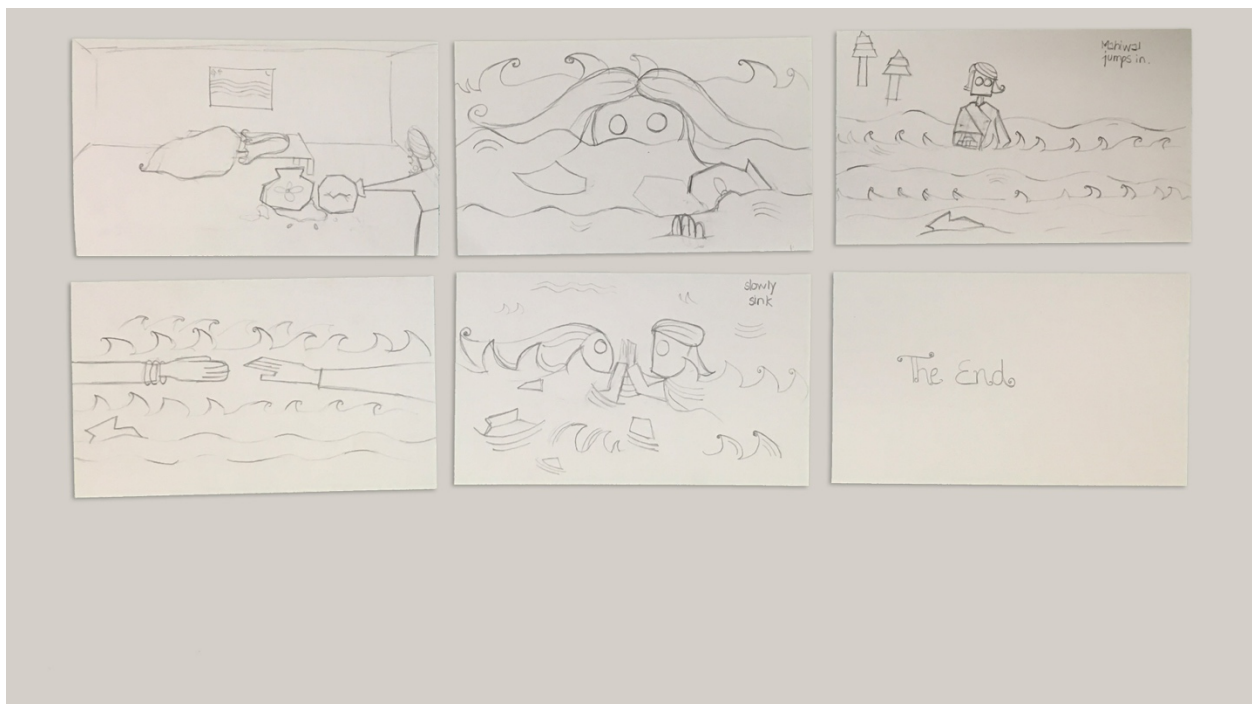


Figure 3.3

Following are some scenes from the storyboard, illustrated in the animation:

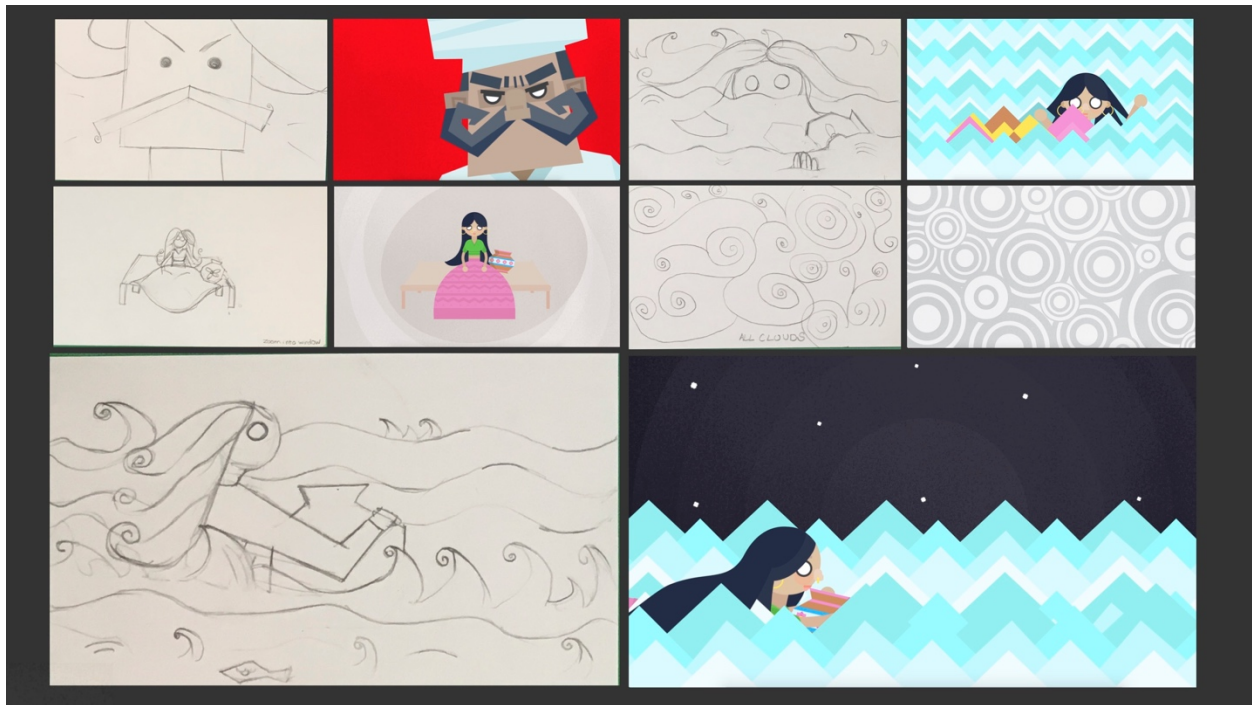


Figure 4

ANIMATIC

The animatic really helped in understanding the pacing and timing of scenes. Before putting the animatic together, each scene from the storyboard was allotted a duration. Then the scenes were arranged to the durations and put together. This helped identify scenes that were long and lurking or short and unclear. It also helped create interesting compositions.

Overall it visualized the linear flow and provided an estimate of the animation length. However, when working with the final assets, the pacing and duration were tweaked quite a bit. Some scenes were added, some were modified. The final animation length turned up longer than the animatic.

The animatic can be viewed here:

<https://anemsyed.myportfolio.com/sohni-mahiwal>

This exercise provided a valuable lesson for future similar projects: to resolve transitions in the animatic stage. For Sohni Mahiwal, most transitions were not resolved in the animatic. These were brainstormed while animating. If these had been fleshed out before, it would have saved some time.

As the storyboard was mostly finalized, it helped and eased out the asset building and cinematography significantly. Similarly had the transitions been finalized in the animatic, it would have eased out the final animation process.

STYLE FRAMES

This process started simultaneously with the story beats and storyboards. As the project furthered, the style evolved.

Figure 4

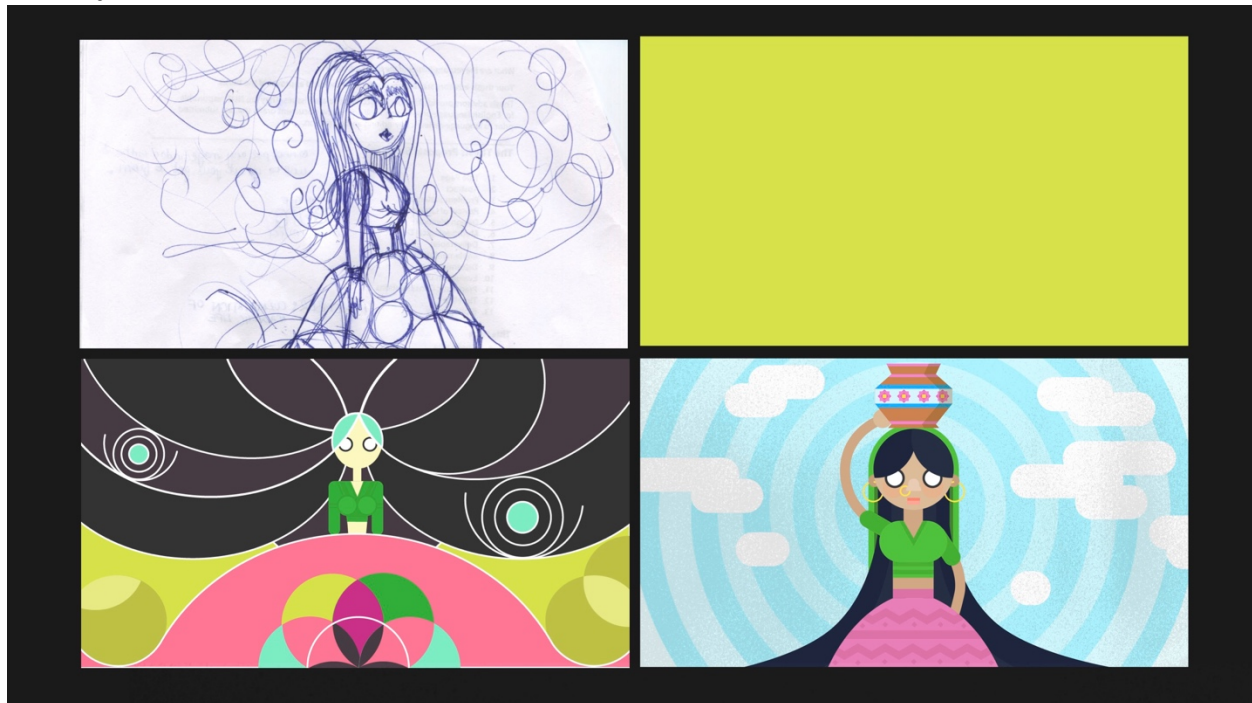


Figure 4.1

Figure 4.2

Figure 4 is the first doodle drawn for this project, even before the storyboard. It was casually done on a loose sheet of paper. This became the start point of the visual style of this project. It set in motion this series of style frames. Figure 4.1 is the first digital illustration of this project. It illustrated the female protagonist (Sohni) in the simplified, abstract, minimal (somewhat mystical) style this project wanted to create. The eyes of Sohnι were inspired from the film “Coraline”. This style frame was presented in the first thesis proposal presentation.

Figure 4.2 is the final Sohnι illustration. Though still abstract, it was more detailed than its last version. Elements were added to enhance visual interest and possibilities of animation. This was presented at the final thesis proposal presentation.

Overall keeping in mind a contemporary, youthful aesthetic, all illustrations were created in this flat, geometric, abstract style. The visuals were intentionally stylized for uniqueness and appeal. Traditional south Asian fashion (especially wedding clothes) were studied for sartorial inspiration. Because of the rich Punjabi culture, there were endless possibilities with colour.



Figure 5

Most colours used in this project are variations of these colours.

ASSETS / ARTWORK

All the assets were created in Adobe Illustrator. Even having done illustrations before, this project was a great practice in further easing the skills with the software. In addition, it was an exercise in working with layers to then work with in Adobe After Effects.



Figure 6

Sohni's father. He has thick eyebrows and a dominating moustache. He was designed to look as a typical patriarchal authority figure. He is in traditional Punjabi clothes.



Figure 7

Sohni was designed to be in traditional Punjabi clothes, with a “matka” balanced atop her head. She was given the earrings and nose ring to enhance her cultural look.



Figure 8

Mahiwal was also designed to wear traditional clothes: “angrakha, chooridaar pajama”. He has the head gear (pagri) similar to Sohni’s father’s. The green colour matches Sohni’s clothes.

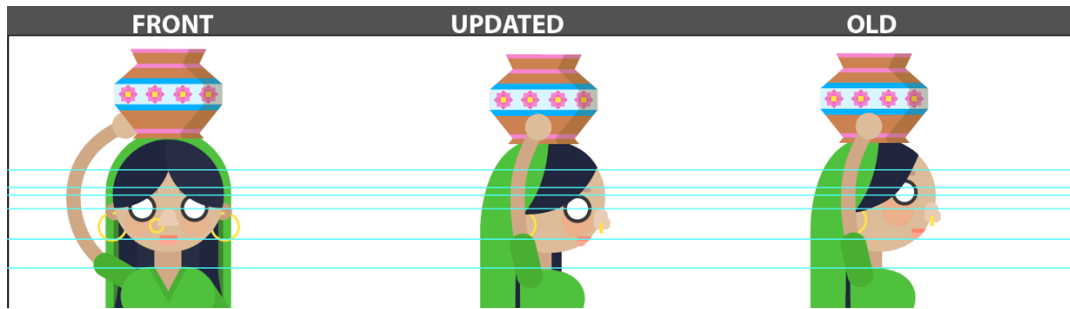


Figure 9

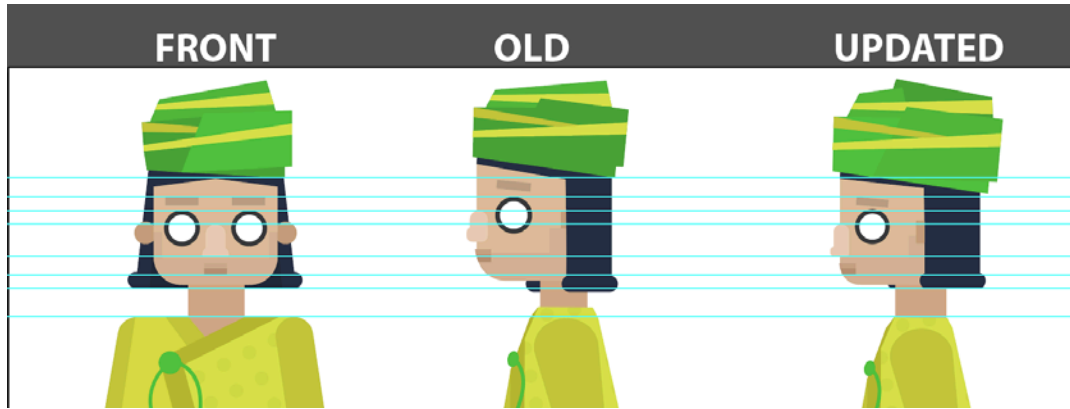


Figure 10

Using guide lines in Illustrator really helped balance facial proportions from front to profile views.



Figure 11

Sohni's husband and sister in law. The eyes of all the characters were kept similar for consistency.



Figure 12

These illustrated clouds were used to transition into the first scene of the map.



Figure 13

This is a map of the Indian Subcontinent including the province of Punjab and its five rivers.



Figure 14

Various pots were illustrated in a minimalist style. They were composed to create this backdrop which was used in the introductory shot of Sohni's father. This design alluded to his job as potmaker.



Figure 15

This illustration, of a stylized sky and clouds, was used behind Sohni in her first shot. Although the initial idea was to create a pattern with illustrated quills (to hint at her skill of painting pots), this design worked out better stylistically.



Figure 16

This pattern was created with stylized, geometric flowers, and was used behind Mahiwal in his first shot.

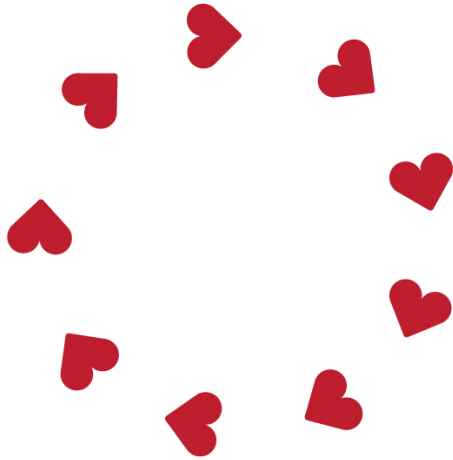


Figure 17

Simple heart illustrations were used for the “falling in love” scene.



Figure 18

Geometric roses were designed for the wedding scene.

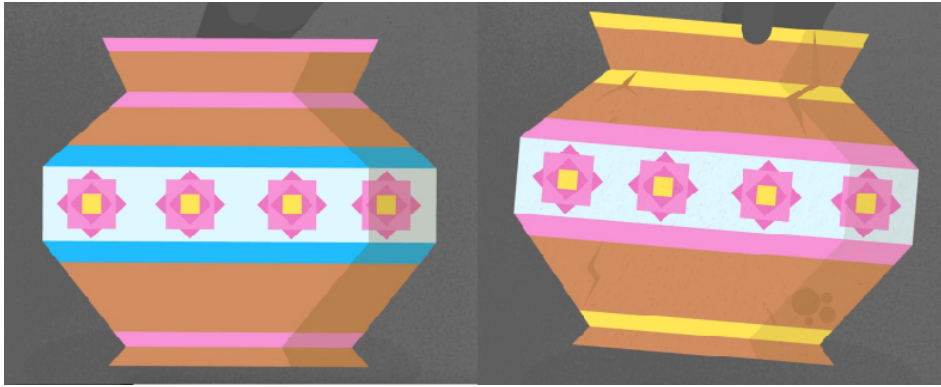


Figure 19

Figure 19.1

On the left *Figure 19* is Sohni's pot. On the right *Figure 19.1* is what her sister-in-law replaced it with. Cracks and texture were added to the second pot to illustrate its fragility.

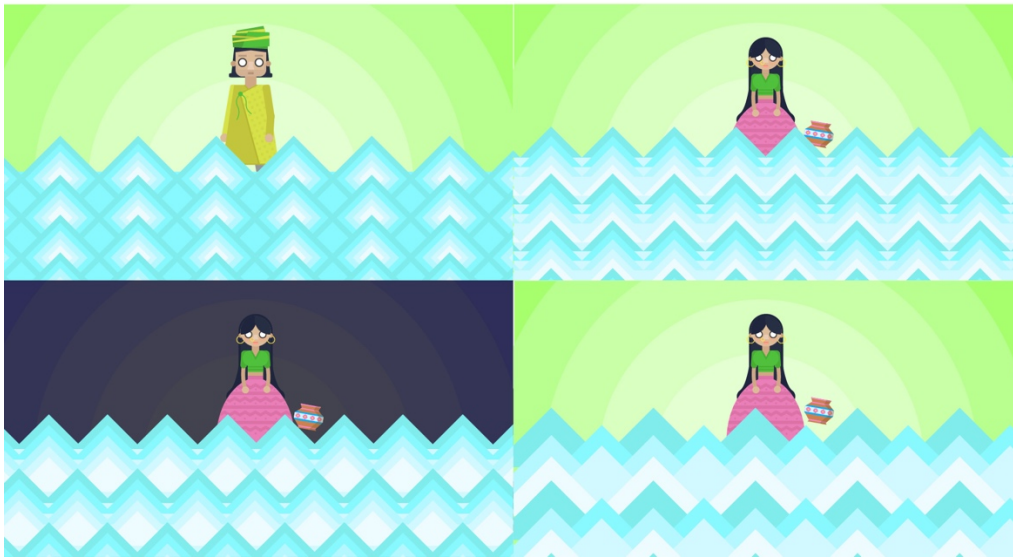


Figure 20

The river went through some revisions.

ANIMATION

To start Adobe Illustrator was used to design the artwork. The illustrations were transferred to Adobe After Effects to create the animation. These software programs were used on an iMac. The animation was developed in batches where each scene had its own composition. Acting on the committee's advice, the scenes were first put in order, and then revisited to refine. The refinement involved easing the motion and creating a seamless flow. This process lasted the entire semester and continued beyond the thesis defense. Even small, subtle changes helped refine motion tremendously.

After Effects' graph editor was extensively used in this project. It is a tool that had always seemed a daunting part of that program, but this project was good exercise in developing familiarity with it. It was the primary tool used to smooth motion. Additionally, the option of "creating shapes from layers" was quite useful. This allowed to convert Adobe Illustrator illustrations (all shapes) into individual layers. This enabled key framing shape paths. This process was most used for Sohni's hair movements.

Compared to typical linear animations, Sohni Mahiwal's animation style is more abstract and stylized. This was fitting to match the overall minimal visual style and whimsical look of the characters. Each scene was treated as a poster. This helped design the visual composition. Then subtle animation was added to different elements. For example: Sohni's hair flowing, Mahiwal's *pagri* (head gear) slightly bobbing, Sohni's skirt moving, Mahiwal's tassels swaying, etc. Major movements were added in to establish the narrative. For example: hand movements, tears, expressions, etc. Transitions were added to move between scenes. This was mostly then with the help of null objects. About 70 of them were used in this animation: an unprecedented number compared to previous projects. Null objects were not just great for transitions, but very handy for zooms and pans.

This project was also invaluable in experiencing the importance of organization. Having not organized previous similar projects, this one, with twenty dense compositions, was much easier to navigate through. There was proper hierarchy: everything was numbered; all layers and groups were rightly labelled. This created a seamless, pleasant workflow. If another person were to hop onto the project, they would easily comprehend its structure.

Punjab پنجاب Gujrat
گجرات
Sohni Mahiwal سونی مہینوال
Subcontinent برصغیر

Figure 22



Figure 23

SUMMARY

TESTING

Throughout the production stage, peers and friends were very helpful in sharing feedback on this project. They commented on colours, visual, motion and narrative. In addition, there were regular, formal meetings with the thesis committee. All critique was very constructive in polishing the work in progress.

The first formal round of testing took place at Imagine RIT. By then the animation was 95% done. The audience at the event was ideal. The testers differed in nationalities, age and gender. They watched the animation and then filled a survey. Their feedback was positive and encouraging. Some commented on speeding up the animation. The feedback was shared and discussed with the thesis committee. Some scenes were streamlined. Then there was a second round of formal testing after completing the animation. This pool of testers was majorly Pakistani / South Asian audience. They watched the animation and filled the same survey. In total thirty-four individuals formally filled the survey.

The audience significantly praised the illustration style and the colour palette. Most found the animation entertaining. They also appreciated the music and did not feel an absence of dialogue. A majority of them understood the story. The few questions that did come up were regards to cultural objects. For instance, clay pots are ubiquitous in Indian culture. Women balancing them on their heads or holding them in their arms is not an uncommon image. But for foreigners the object was not readily recognizable.

Audience excitement, especially by South Asians, validated this project. They agreed that repackaging cultural folk stories into modern mediums is one good way keeping them alive. This assurance highlighted the holistic aim of this project: more people thinking about heritage, possibly delving into the subject, and understanding present-day culture in an accurate context.

Some comments on the animation:

“I think this is very appropriate way to bring back these classic folktales.”

“It’s a real love story of our land.”

Sohni Mahiwal

Preserving South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age: Sex: Nationality:

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

Yes No Not Sure

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

Yes No Not Sure

Did you fully understand the story?

Yes No Not Sure

Did the music compliment the animation?

Yes No Not Sure

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

Ok Too fast Too Slow

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well?

Yes No Not Sure

How entertaining was it from 1-10 ?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Would a voiceover or subtitles have helped the storytelling?

Yes No Not Sure

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

Yes No Not Sure

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture?

Yes No Not Sure

Comments:

Figure 24

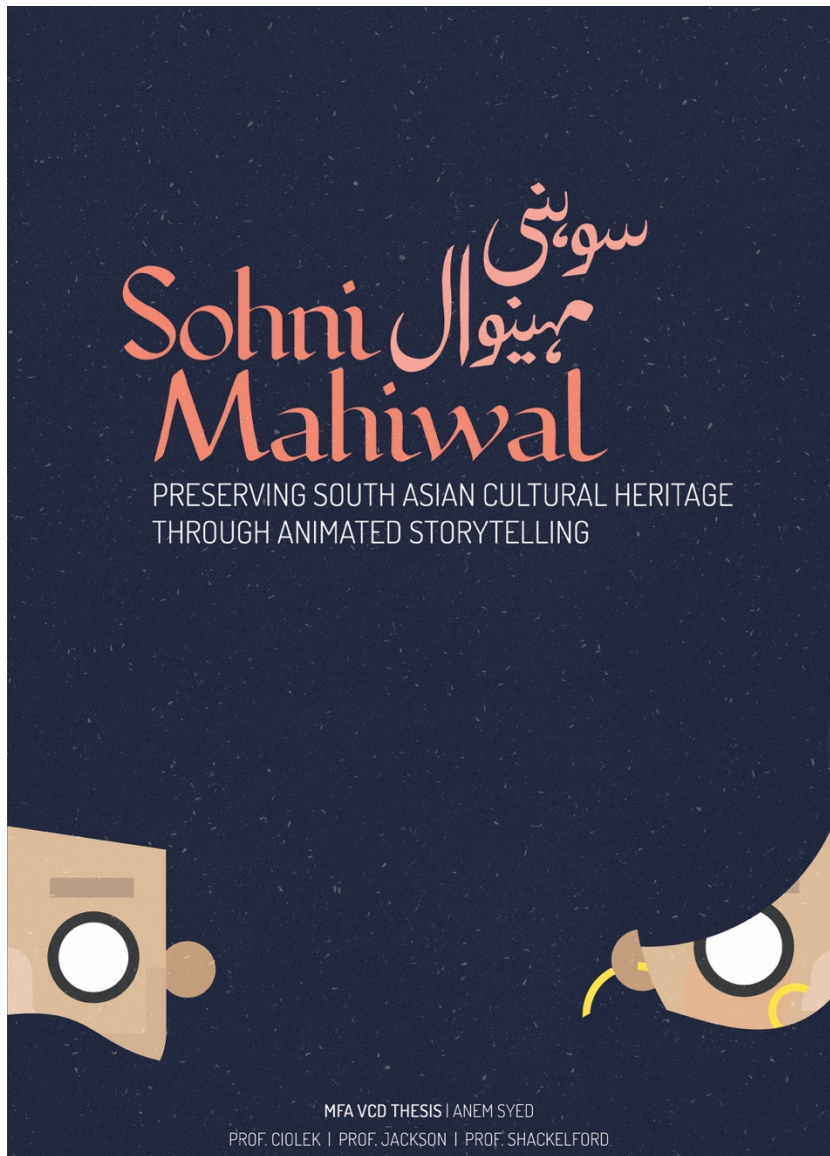


Figure 25

This poster was displayed with the animation at Imagine RIT and at the final thesis show.

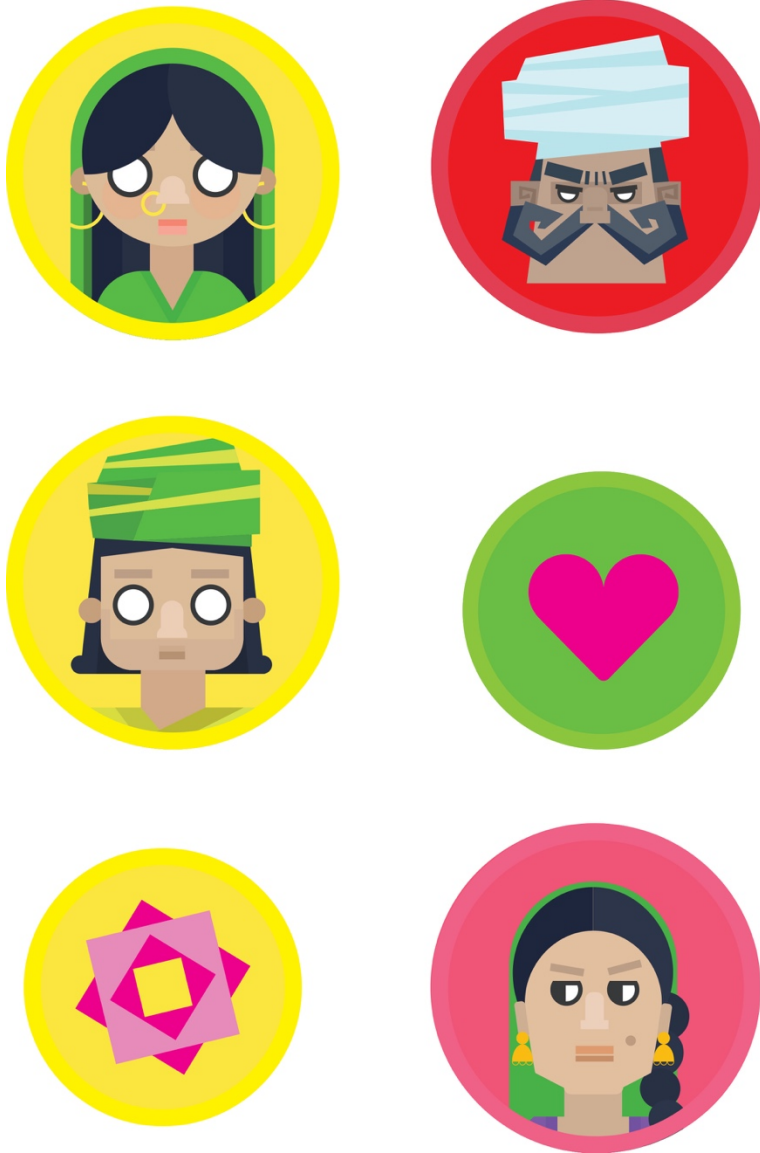


Figure 26

The stickers were designed to complement this project.

This project was submitted to the Adobe Design Achievement Awards 2017 and was shortlisted as a semifinalist.

CONCLUSION

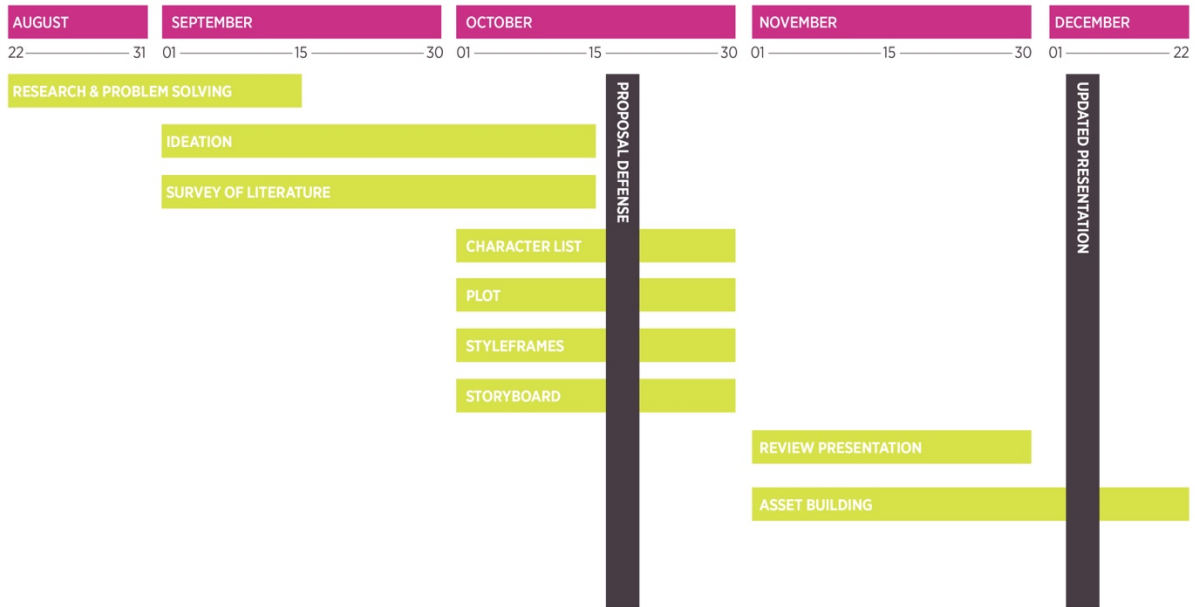
On a personal level, the experience of art college in Lahore was significantly formative. It stimulated an interest in social and cultural diversity in Pakistan. Studying design and creativity inculcated an attitude of critical thinking. This translated into research on South Asian history. A gradual process of reading, discussing and thinking, illuminated that the true essence of this region's heritage was in its cultural diversity and complex history. Hoping to increase public knowledge on the subject generated this project's problem statement. It is a personal, passionate inquiry. It is not a culmination in South Asian heritage preservation, but is definitely an important milestone.

This project enhanced technical knowledge on animations. It provided the opportunity to look at other artists' work, read specialized books and watch online tutorials. All the research highlighted pre-planning as a key stage. This proved extremely useful in providing structure to the project. The storyboard was a tremendous help in creating artwork and developing style frames. Despite being meticulous, some areas could have been better resolved. For example: scene transitions should be finalized beforehand. Generally, the key lesson was to flesh out everything in as much detail before digital production.

Having not done storytelling before, this project was a novel experience. Despite its pre-existing narrative, making sure it was clearly understood was challenging - especially in the absence of dialogue and voiceover. It is not difficult for the designer to get complacent in believing the viewers will understand it all. Therefore, it is important to commence formal testing way before the project deadline. The questions and concerns for this project were raised towards the end of the project pipeline. If tested earlier, detailed updates could be made in place of quick corrections close to the deadline.

TIMELINE

THESIS TIMELINE FALL 2016



THESIS TIMELINE SPRING 2016



APPENDIX

**SOHNI MAHIWAL
PRESERVING SOUTH ASIAN
CULTURAL HERITAGE
THROUGH ANIMATED STORYTELLING**

Anem Syed Iqbal
December 6, 2016

Thesis Proposal
MFA Visual Communication Design | School of Design
Rochester Institute of Technology

ABSTRACT

Preserving South Asian Cultural Heritage through Animated Storytelling.
Iqbal, Anem Syed.

Pakistan's cultural diversity and rich history are unfortunately, not understood or celebrated on a larger scale within the country. While there are small organizations working sincerely on heritage preservation, there are no substantial efforts by the state. (Paracha 2015) In the 80's Pakistan was systematically Islamized by an Arab leaning military dictator: religion was used to influence culture; school books were tweaked to propagate patriotism and religious superiority, the region's rich pluralistic history was overshadowed by conservative interpretations of Islam. (Haider 2011) (Bandial 2016)

Today Pakistani youth experience an identity crisis. (Haider 2011) (Pitafi 2016) They are ambiguous about their culture or more so there is a lack of understanding. To understand themselves as a nation, as a society, it is important to encourage in them critical thinking and discourse on South Asian culture. Currently most of this region's history and cultural documentation is in text. One does not find visual sources that can engage the youth of today. This document proposes to create Indian heritage inspired visual content that is disseminated on the internet to engage this target audience.

YouTube is a great educational source of today. There are channels covering world history and culture but there is nothing specifically on South Asia. This thesis project aims at filling that gap and contributing towards preservation of South Asian cultural heritage through animated videos. While the proposal is to animate one folk story from Punjab, it will be part of a series of short animations that record not just folk stories, but city tales, linguistic evolutions, interesting historic anecdotes, and similar content.

This thesis requires a thorough research of animated storytelling, cinematography, and motion graphics.

Keywords: South Asia, culture, heritage, motion graphics, animation, storytelling
Blog: <https://www.tumblr.com/blog/anemsyed>

PROBLEM STATEMENT

HOW CAN WE PRESERVE SOUTH ASIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CREATE AN EDUCATIONAL SOURCE, IN ORDER TO LEARN ABOUT OURSELVES, AS A NATION, AS A SOCIETY?

Cultural alienation is often felt within Pakistan especially in the younger generation. Pakistan is 69 years old. In the grand scope of history, it really is not that long. For thousands of years it was the Indian subcontinent, a land with a complex history, tattooed by the remains of cultural diversity. (Course, Buddha and Ashoka: Crash Course World History #6 2012) (Albinia 2008) This region was home to one of the oldest civilizations, the Indus Valley Civilization where people settled around the river Indus - as traditionally most people did then. (Albinia 2008) (Course, Indus Valley Civilization: Crash Course World History #2 2012) From that time on till date, the subcontinent was exposed to Greeks, Turks, Persians, Arabs, Africans, Mughals and most recently, the British. This land is the birthplace of Hinduism. This is where Sanskrit literature flourished. It is also home to sacred Buddhists sites. For centuries, ethnically, linguistically, culturally diverse people lived here - merging, growing, evolving – each one adding to the enriched character of the subcontinent. (ushistory.org n.d.)

With this inherently pluralistic character, when Islam was pushed at the forefront of Pakistan's society, it was in direct contradiction to its centuries old motley culture. There is no official standing of the government testifying that Pakistan is home to a diverse group of people with different faiths and traditions. (Paracha 2015)

This diversity needs to be celebrated. Within four provinces of Pakistan, there are several different languages spoken. Each have their own character. Each have their own traditions. This range of culture is beautiful and it is important to generate dialogue and critical thinking on this subject. It is imperative to have discourse in order to learn about ourselves, as a nation, as a society. Intelligent conversations on history and culture will not only put South Asian history into perspective but also the history of people on the planet. As Kamil Khan Mumtaz puts, "Heritage, history, traditions define who we are, where we are, where we are coming from and where we want to go. They define what it means to be human and are the roadmaps, signposts and guides for our journey, our progress and our development towards achieving our goal of realising our highest potentials, our selves. Lose these and you lose the script." (Ezdi 2016)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This section is divided into three parts:

4. CONTENT

Empires of the Indus – The Story of a River

By Alice Albinia

John Murray Publishers 2009

This book is written by an English journalist in which she chronicles her travel south to north along the mighty river Indus. It is a fascinating account of her journey that documents the rich history of the subcontinent. She is well researched and over the course meets aplenty interesting people who provide glimpses into local traditions and customs. She walks in mud, rain, through deserts, on foot, on public transport - exploring, documenting, commenting. She even manages to go through the dangerous parts of Pakistan. She follows the path than Alexander took to invade the region. Documents the history of Buddhism. The most interesting chapter is on River Saints, religious devotees who settled along the river.

When Europe Loved Islam

BY MARYA HANNUN SOPHIE SPAAN

MAY 5, 2016

Accessed September 25, 2016

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/05/05/when-europe-loved-islam-interwar-weimar-republic-wilmersdorf-mosque/>

This article discusses Islam and Europe in the interwar period – early 20th century. This was the time when westerners were increasingly interested in Islam. They understood it as a progressive, intellectual and modern school of thought. Wilmersdorf mosque in Berlin, which is in the center of this article, was built by Muslims migrating from Punjab. This mosque often held philosophical discussions on Islam and many German converted to this religion. While the citizens were fascinated by this exotic eastern religion, the states invested extra in the well-being of its Muslim population largely for strategic military gains. Many Muslims soldiers from modern day Pakistan fought in the British army during the world wars. This article highlights this past as good relations between the west and Muslims. The infamy of Islam today is one major reason influencing the disillusionment of Pakistanis from culture.

The aforementioned article generated a discourse. In the following podcast, the writers Marya Hannun and Sophie Spaan, who are both PhD students in Arabic and Islamic studies, and are historians of the intellectual history of Islam, discuss the political and cultural track of their content. The lesson to take away from this discussion is the importance of discourse and dialogue. Related to this thesis project, it is important to generate that conversation on south Asian history and culture.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWU8n4OZM30>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DKGJmoqWwRs>

Accessed September 25, 2016

H Nisar: Murder of History in Pakistan

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n9IXZEDYA70>

Accessed September 25, 2016

In this video senior journalist of Pakistan Hassan Nisar discusses the practice of biased history in the country. He mentions the fall of Dhaka and discrimination against Bengalis being glossed over in history. He raises important questions about the corruption of government creating class difference and restlessness among the nation.

The Ancient Indus Valley Civilization 3500 – 1700 BCE

<https://www.harappa.com>

Accessed September 25, 2016

This website comprehensively records the Indus Valley Civilization which is one of the four ancient civilizations of the world. It has images, essays, excavation records and more. It is a compelling history of the advent of society and culture in south Asia, and puts into perspective the evolution of civilization and society of the land that is today Pakistan.

Lok Virsa

<http://lokvirsa.org.pk>

Accessed October 1, 2016

Lok Virsa is a Pakistani national organization working towards cultural and heritage preservation. The name translates to “Folk Heritage”. It has a museum and library and often organizes cultural events.

Citizen Archive of Pakistan

<http://citizenarchive.org>

Accessed October 1, 2016

Citizen Archive Pakistan (CAP) is a non-profit organization associated with several international organizations working towards the same goal of cultural and heritage preservation.

Folk Love Stories of Pakistan

<https://sites.google.com/site/folkstalesofpakistan/sohni-mahiwal>

Accessed September 20, 2016

This website records some of the most popular tragic love stories of the Subcontinent.

Sohni Mahiwal

<https://sites.google.com/site/folkstalesofpakistan/sohni-mahiwal>

Accessed September 20, 2016

Sohni Mahiwal is one of the popular tragic love stories from the province Punjab. Like most folk stories, this passed down generations through the tradition of oral storytelling.

Sohni is the daughter of an earthenware pot maker. They live in a village near River Chenab in Punjab. Sohni grows up painting the pots and masters the art. One day a boy from Uzbekistan named Izzat Baig turns up at her shop and falls in love with her. He never returns home and Sohni's father, who at the time is unaware of Izzat Baig's interest in her daughter, hires him to herd buffalos. Thus getting the name "Mahiwal" which literally means "water buffalo herder". Over time their love flourishes until the family finds out. They arrange for Sohni to marry someone else. Mahiwal is distraught and he moves into a hut across the river from Sohni's new home. At night Sohni swims in her clay pot across the river to meet Mahiwal. One night her sister in law sees this and replaces her pot with an unbaked one. Next night when Sohni crosses the river the pot breaks and dissolves. Mahiwal witnessing this jumps in the river and they both drown.

Paar Chanah Day
Coke Studio 2016

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrPvQvbp3Cg>

Accessed September 20, 2016

This is a recent Coke Studio song inspired by the story of Sohni Mahiwal. It is a dialogue between Sohni and her “ghariya” (clay pot) where the pot is warning her to not cross the river as she will drown in the unbaked pot, but Sohni is bedazzled with love and is adamant on swimming across the river (River Chenab) to meet Mahiwal (her love).

5. TECHNICAL

Animated Storytelling – Simple Steps for Creating Animation & Motion Graphics

By Liz Blazer

Peachpit Press 2016

This book is an easy to follow, step by step guide from pre planning an animation to developing it. It is light hearted in tone and, even though it is instructional, it is fun to read. The writer covers all topics right from creating a narrative, to visualizing it and finally developing it. She pairs all chapters with examples.

The Filmmaker’s Eye – Learning (and breaking) the Rules of Cinematic Composition

By Gustavo Mercado

Elsevier Inc. 2011

This book is a guide on effective storytelling through choice of shots. It introduces principles on cinematography and how choice of shots can enhance the narrative.

Design for Motion – Fundamentals and Techniques of Motion Design

Austin Shaw

Taylor & Francis 2016

This book is a comprehensive model on everything motion design. It explains the entire process of creating a motion piece right from mind maps to the final piece. It explains storyboards, style frames, design boards. For each chapter there are corresponding visual references.

6. AESTHETIC

YouTube Channel Crash Course

This channel creates educational content on everything. In ten minutes or so they provide condensed summaries of particular topics like world history, philosophy, literature, chemistry, physics, games and more. Through most of the video the narrator talks into the camera but each one is paired with a small animation. These were studied as aesthetic and motion references. The videos that are relevant to this research are as follows:

Indus Valley Civilization: Crash Course World History #2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7ndRwqJYDM&index=2&list=PLBDA2E52FB1EF80C9>

Accessed September 25, 2016

The Persians & Greeks: Crash Course World History #5

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-mkVSasZIM&list=PLBDA2E52FB1EF80C9&index=5>

Accessed September 25, 2016

Buddha and Ashoka: Crash Course World History #6

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Nn5uqE3C9w>

Accessed September 25, 2016

The Silk Road and Ancient Trade: Crash Course World History #9

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfe-eNq-Qyg&list=PLBDA2E52FB1EF80C9&index=9>

Accessed September 27, 2016

Alexander the Great and the Situation ... the Great? Crash Course World History #8

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LsrkWDCvxg&index=8&list=PLBDA2E52FB1EF80C9>

Accessed September 30, 2016

Decolonization and Nationalism Triumphant: Crash Course World History #40

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_sGTspaF4Y&list=PLBDA2E52FB1EF80C9&index=40

Accessed September 30, 2016

Islam and Politics: Crash Course World History 216

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ka8csjsmX6I&index=16&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtNjasccl-WajpONGX3zoY4M>

Accessed September 30, 2016

The Mughal Empire and Historical Reputation: Crash Course World History #217

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nbuM0aJjVgE>

Accessed September 30, 2016

The preceding videos were also used for content providing insight into the long and complex history of South Asia and the influences it absorbed in different time periods.

The Boat

Based on the story by Nam Lee

Accessed October 15, 2016

<http://www.sbs.com.au/theboat/>

This is an interactive graphic novel. It was studied as an example of storytelling technique and style.

DESIGN IDEATION

Punjab is one of the two provinces that was divided between India and Pakistan in the 1947 partition. Despite the breakup, the culture across borders is synonymous. It is vibrant. It is colorful. People of Punjab are known for their love of food and festivals.

This thesis is to animate a story from Punjabi folklore. The story is called Sohni Mahiwal, and is a breathtaking tale of love (Tahir 2016). In the late 18th century, during the Mughal era, there is a beautiful girl named Sohni. She works with her father baking and painting claypots. Mahiwal, who is travelling through the city, is so bedazzled by Sohni's beauty that he never leaves. The couple fall in love madly. Sohni's family finds out and show severe resentment. They force Sohni into marriage with another man. Mahiwal moves across the river from Sohni's new home. Impassioned, one night Sohni swims across the river, clinging on to a claypot that keeps her afloat. Her sister in law witnesses this and on Sohni's return she replaces the claypot with an unbaked one. Next night when Sohni is swimming to Mahiwal, the claypot dissolves and Sohni drowns. Distraught, Mahiwal jumps into the river and drowns with her. Legend has it that their bodies washed up ashore in Sindh. Today Sohni's tomb is in Shadadpur, Sindh.

Their story has inspired films, songs, poetry, theatre, paintings. Most recently it was narrated as a song in Coke Studio Pakistan. However, it has never been portrayed as an animated story with motion graphics in a modern aesthetic.

This thesis will illustrate their story in an linear animation using the three act story structure:

1. Problem / Character and conflict
 2. Character works towards a solution.
 3. Character solves the problem / Resolution
- (Blazer 2016)

The visual style will be flat illustrative with an eastern color palette. Special attention will be paid to sartorial design to invoke the character of 18th century India. Eastern patterns and music will be used to enhance the south Asian look and feel.

While the aim is to record the story of Sohni Mahiwal, it will be a summarized narrative. The characters will be stylized in an abstract way. The narrative will focus on the couple only and not on the supporting characters. If need be supporting characters will be shown as silhouettes.

It is not an uncommon belief that books lose a certain chunk of their character when translated. A big essence of Sohni Mahiwal's story lies in language which is Punjabi. Anything translated into English does not bear the same emotion or character as it does in Punjabi. So the animation is proposed to be visual driven and without dialogue. For the South Asian audience however, there will be a different version paired with a Punjabi voiceover.

Mind Maps





Digital Design in Motion | Storyboard Worksheet Prof. Jackson NAME _____

SHOT NUMBER: 1

SHOT TYPE: _____
CAMERA MOVEMENT: Slow zoom in to the
ACTION: Map of Gujrat.
AUDIO: Clouds merge.

SHOT NUMBER: 2

SHOT TYPE: _____
CAMERA MOVEMENT: Clouds part.
ACTION: Reveal Sohni with a claypot
AUDIO: Character Introduction

PAGE _____ OF _____

Digital Design in Motion | Storyboard Worksheet Prof. Jackson NAME _____

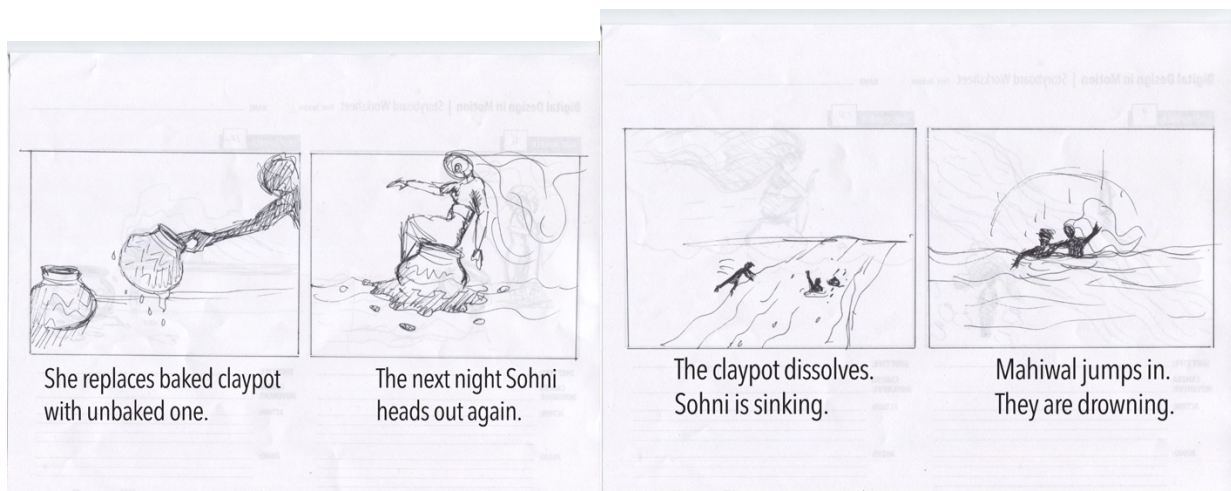
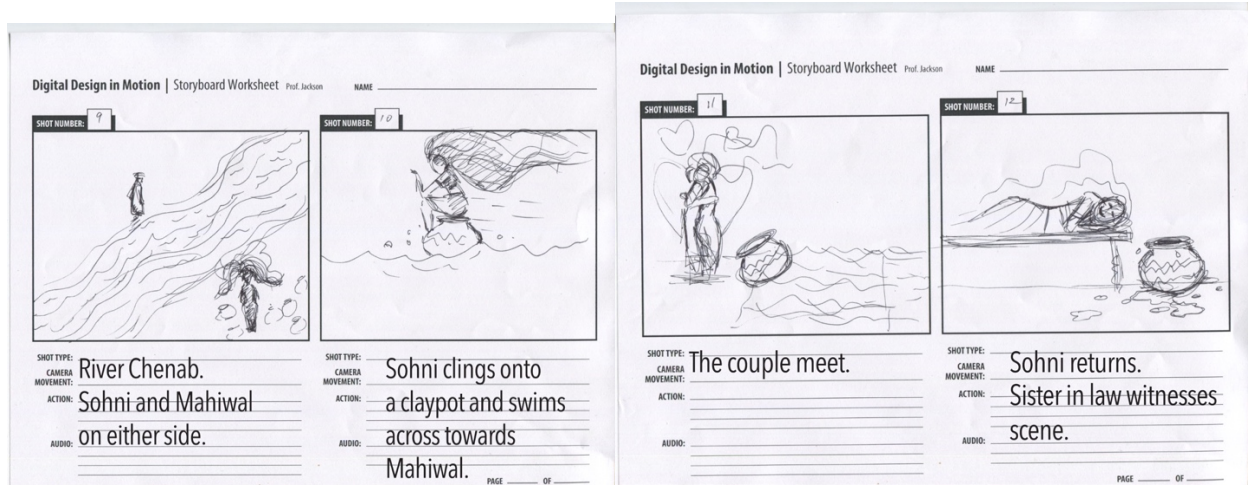
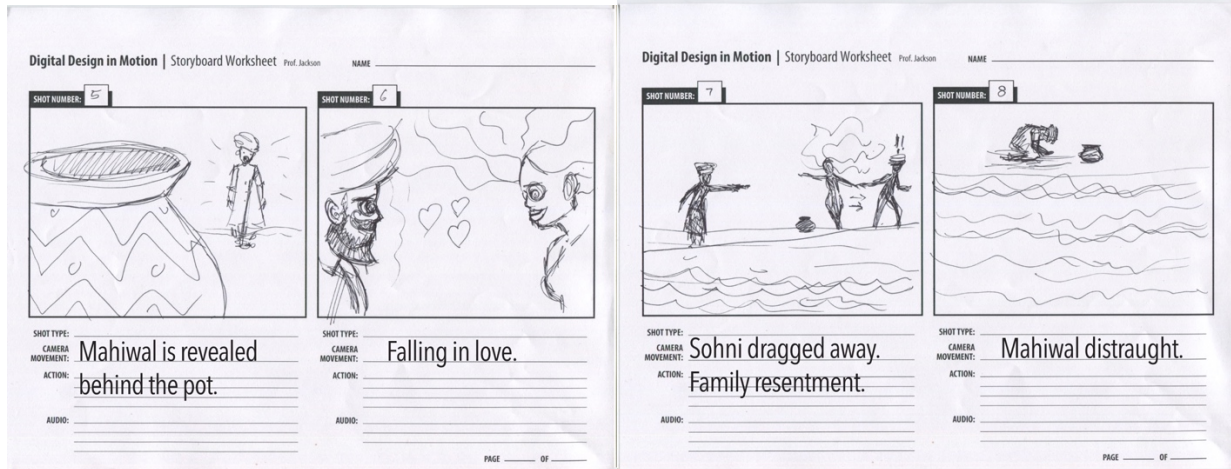
SHOT NUMBER: 3

SHOT TYPE: _____
CAMERA MOVEMENT: Sohni zooms in.
ACTION: _____
AUDIO: _____

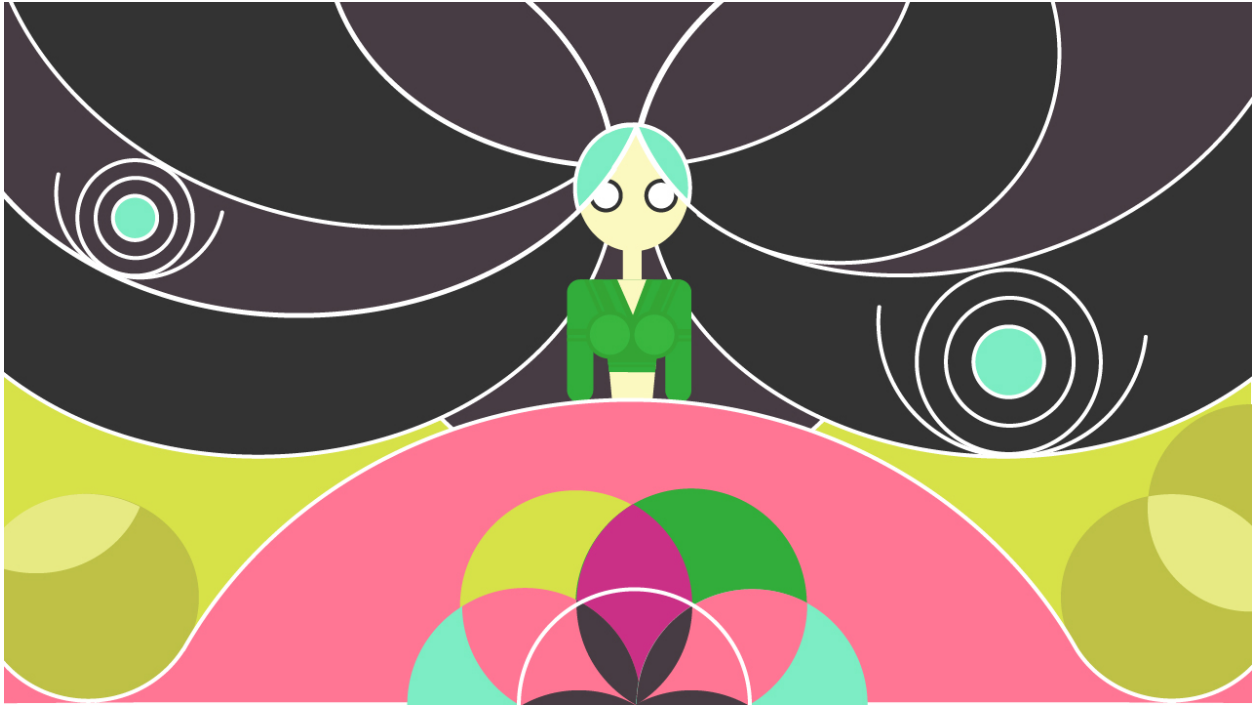
SHOT NUMBER: 4

SHOT TYPE: _____
CAMERA MOVEMENT: Sohni places claypot
ACTION: on the floor.
AUDIO: close shot
360

PAGE _____ OF _____



Style Frames





SOHNI MAHIWAL

TAGLINE – Love, at all costs.

DELIVERABLE – Short Animation

DURATION – 1 minute (more or less)

DIMENSION – 1920 x 1080p

CHARACTERS – Sohni (female protagonist)
Mahiwal (male protagonist)
Sohni's Father
Sohni's Husband
Sohni's Sister-in-law

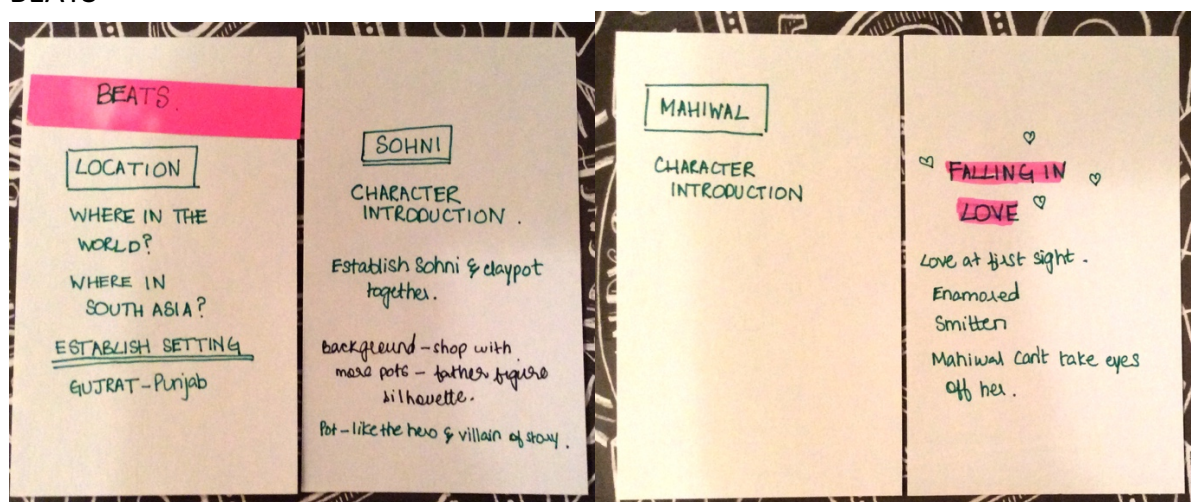
TONE – Heartfelt, Whimsical

PLOT – A man and a woman fall in love but the woman is forced into marriage with someone else. Impassioned, they continue seeing each other, meeting a tragic end.

THEME – Forbidden Love

ASSETS – Logo Sohni Mahiwal, Clouds, Map-Subcontinent-Gujrat, rural setting (grass, sky, green fields), River, Clay pots, Father, Father's clay pot shop, Sohni (and attire), Mahiwal (and attire), Sohni's husband, Sohni's sister in law.

BEATS –



BUT

- * But they can't make their love public.
- * Against society.
- * Against family.

Character & Conflict

Sohni and Mahiwal fall in love but they can't make it public lest society separates them. or family because society & family will never agree.

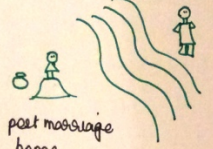
SEPARATION

- Pain, suffering.

Family Resentment
Family against the relationship.
disapproval.

Sohni & Mahiwal
broken, distraught.
Sohni marriage to someone else.
Establish wedding sister in law.

RIVER CHENAB
the division



post marriage home.

FRUSTRATION

IMPASSIONED!!

THE PASSION

BLIND LOVE

Sohni swims across to meet Mahiwal

CHARACTER WORKS TOWARDS A SOLUTION!


THE BAD LUCK

the omen
bad timing.

THE SPITE

Witnessed by
Sister in law.

Spiteful
— replaces pot with unbaked one
unbaked one.



RESOLUTION

→ Next Night
Pot dissolves
Sohni sinks.
Mahiwal jumps.
Both drown

The End.

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

OBJECTIVE

It will be a motion graphics piece animating the story of Sohni Mahiwal.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The primary target audience is South Asians but it is also to pique the interest of an international audience interested in South Asian history, culture and evolution.

COMPONENTS

Adobe Illustrator
Adobe After Effects
Adobe Audition
Autodesk Maya
Macbook Pro.

DELIVERABLES

The animation will be a minute long in the dimension 1920 x 1080p.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

This thesis will be implemented with thorough planning especially focusing on storyboards. Past theses of motion graphics stressed heavily on comprehensive storyboarding. The rest of the semester will be used to generate style frames, finalise storyboard, animatics and carry motion tests. Final animation development will start next semester after the pre-production is in good shape.

DISSEMINATION

This thesis will be disseminated on the following forums:

ADDA – Adobe Design Achievement Awards. Free Entry.

Motionographer.com - Free Entry.

Imagine RIT - Free Entry.

Communication Arts – Design Competition - \$45.00

Facebook and Youtube – Free Entry.

EVALUATION PLAN

The following questions will be asked through surveys to analyze the success of the animation:

Did the visual style convey a south Asian cultural setting?

Was the narrative clear?

Did it generate interest in the target audience?

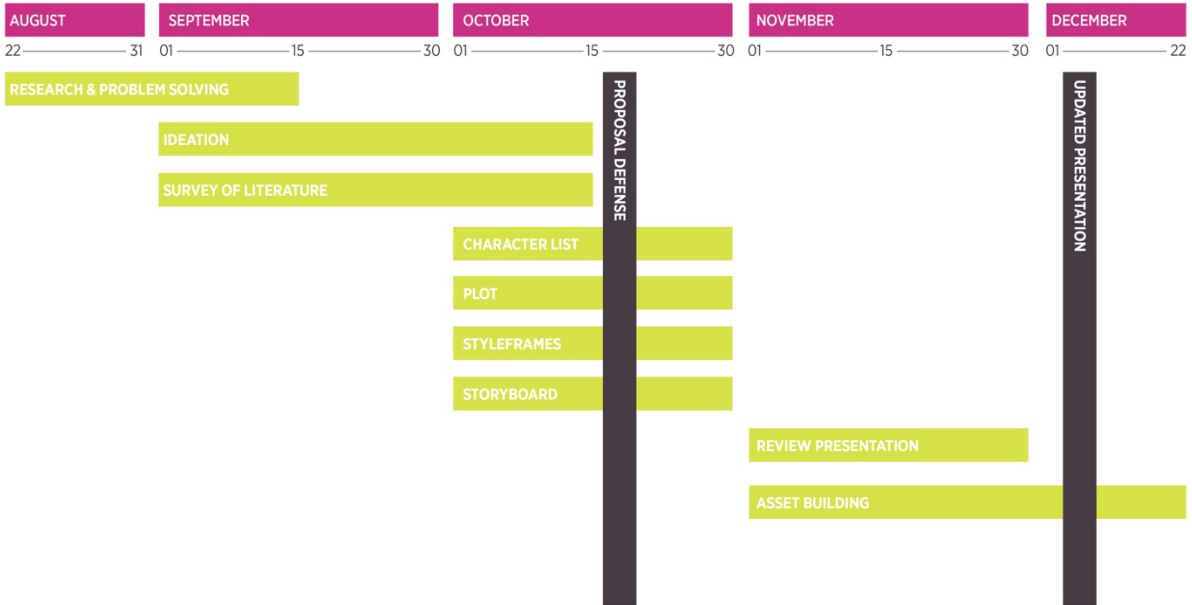
Did the motion design work well with the content?

PRAGMATIC CONSIDERATIONS

This project will require sound that most likely will incur copyright licensing fees.

TIMELINE

THESIS TIMELINE FALL 2016



THESIS TIMELINE SPRING 2016



Sohni Mahiwal Preserving South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age: 13 Sex: Female Nationality: Puertorican, black, indian

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did you fully undestand the story?

Yes ☐ No ☒ Not Sure

11
15
26

Did the music compliment the animation?

Yes ☐ No ☒ Not Sure

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

☒ Ok ☐ Too fast ☐ Too Slow

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Sure

How entertaining was it from 1-10 ?

1 2 3 4 5 ☒ 6 7 8 9 10

Would a voiceover or subtitles have helped the storytelling?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Comments: They sholdld make the story more interesting to make people want to watch more of it.

Sohni Mahiwal Preserving South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age: 24 Sex: Female Nationality: Chinese

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

16

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Sure ☐

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Sure ☐

Did you fully understand the story?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Sure ☐

Did the music compliment the animation?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Sure ☐

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

Ok ☐ Too fast ☐ Too Slow ☒

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Sure ☐

How entertaining was it from 1-10 ?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ☒ 10

Would a voiceover or subtitles have helped the storytelling?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure ☒

18
11
29

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Sure ☐

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Sure ☐

Comments:

very nice animation and illustrations.
I like the color, and very easy to understand! "♡"

Sohni Mahiwal Preserving South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age: 26 Sex: Female Nationality: China

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did you fully understand the story?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure (little bit confuse about the bottles)

Did the music compliment the animation?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

☒ Ok ☐ Too fast ☐ Too Slow

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

How entertaining was it from 1-10 ?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 ☒ 9 10

Would a voiceover or subtitles have helped the storytelling?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Sohni Mahiwal Preserving South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age: 19

Sex: F

Nationality: White

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

☒ Yes☐ No☐ Not Sure

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

☒ Yes☐ No☐ Not Sure

no shy

Did you fully understand the story?

☒ Yes☐ No☐ Not Sure

Did the music compliment the animation?

☒ Yes☐ No☐ Not Sure

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

☐ Ok☐ Too fast☒ Too Slow

Some shots too long

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well?

☐ Yes☐ No☒ Not Sure

I'm white lol

How entertaining was it from 1-10 ?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Would a voiceover or subtitles have helped the storytelling?

☐ Yes☒ No☐ Not Sure

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

☒ Yes☐ No☐ Not Sure

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture?

☒ Yes☐ No☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Sohni Mahiwal Preserving South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age: 38 Sex: M Nationality: Italian

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Did you fully understand the story?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Did the music compliment the animation?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

☐ Ok

☐ Too fast

☒ Too Slow

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☒ Not Sure

How entertaining was it from 1-10 ?

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

☒ 8

9

10

Would a voiceover or subtitles have helped the storytelling?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Sohni Mahiwal Preserving South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age: 29 Sex: female Nationality: Venezuela

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did you fully understand the story?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did the music compliment the animation?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

☐ Ok ☐ Too fast ☒ Too Slow

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

How entertaining was it from 1-10 ?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ☒ 10

Would a voiceover or subtitles have helped the storytelling?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Nice style, i liked the animation and colors ! 😊

Sohni Mahiwal Preserving South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age: 24 Sex: F Nationality: Dominican

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did you fully understand the story?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did the music compliment the animation?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

Ok ☐ Too fast ☒ Too Slow

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

How entertaining was it from 1-10 ?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 ☒ 9 10

Would a voiceover or subtitles have helped the storytelling?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Comments: Great style, I would speed it up a little bit.
Fun to watch

Sohni Mahiwal Preserving South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age: 34 Sex: M Nationality: Polish-American

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did you fully understand the story?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure if I didn't know it already, probably not.

Did the music compliment the animation?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure Deaf. :)

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

☒ Ok ☐ Too fast ☐ Too Slow

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

How entertaining was it from 1-10 ?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Would a voiceover or subtitles have helped the storytelling?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Comments:

Love the colors and graphics.

Animation speed was good.

could use more faster and slower speeds to help complement

words some more.

Very nice work!

The texture is great.

Sohni Mahiwal Preserving South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age: 31 Sex: F Nationality: Russia

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did you fully understand the story?

Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Sure

Did the music compliment the animation?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

☒ Ok ☐ Too fast ☐ Too Slow

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

How entertaining was it from 1-10 ?

1 . 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ☒ 10

Would a voiceover or subtitles have helped the storytelling?

Yes ☐ No ☒ Not Sure

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Comments:

I didn't get the metaphor of the pot. When the woman changed those. And I didn't understand what is the end of the story. Did they die?

Sohni Mahiwal Preserving South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age: 18 Sex: Male Nationality: African

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did you fully understand the story?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Not Sure

Did the music compliment the animation?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

☐ Ok ☐ Too fast ☒ Too Slow

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

How entertaining was it from 1-10 ?

1 2 3 4 5 6 ☒ 7 8 9 10

Would a voiceover or subtitles have helped the storytelling?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Sure

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Comments:

If leaves a good message, but the progression didn't grip me quickly. Also I didn't know it was the sister in law until later. Other than that, great animation

Sohni Mahiwal Preserving South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age: 23 Sex: Female Nationality: Indian

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

Yes No Not Sure

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

Yes No Not Sure

Did you fully understand the story?

Yes No Not Sure

Did the music compliment the animation?

Yes No Not Sure The choice of music is apt.

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

Ok Too fast Too Slow

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well?

Yes No Not Sure

How entertaining was it from 1-10 ?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Would a voiceover or subtitles have helped the storytelling?

Yes No Not Sure Subtitles in certain parts

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

Yes No Not Sure

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture?

Yes No Not Sure

Comments:

I really like the style of animation. The visuals represent the South Asian culture well. I think you could speed it up a little.

Sohni Mahiwal presented South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age: 25 Sex: F Nationality: Taiwan

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did you fully understand the story?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did the music compliment the animation?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

Ok ☐ Too fast ☒ Too slow

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

How entertaining was it from 1-10?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 ☒ 8 9 10
could too slow

Would a voiceover or subtitles help with the storytelling?

Yes ☐ No ☒ Yes ☒ Could be

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure ☒ Yes w/ supporting text and background explained along w/ it, yes.

Comments:

- Introduction of the characters in the beginning are too slow, 3-4 secs would be ~~efficient~~ efficient.
- Father angry scene, it wasn't super clear in the first scene, maybe w/ a $\frac{1}{1}$ would help but not a huge deal (ask me in person I'll explain, ha)

Sohni Mahiwal Preserving South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age: 20 Sex: Female Nationality: Asian-American

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Did you fully understand the story?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Did the music compliment the animation?

Sound effects work but the main music on loop doesn't seem to fit.

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Not Sure

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

Slow at points, like the beginning marriage scene

☒ Ok

☐ Too fast

☐ Too Slow

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well? Not really

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

How entertaining was it from 1-10?

1

2

3

4

☒ 5

6

7

8

9

10

Would a voiceover or subtitles have helped the storytelling?

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Not Sure

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not Sure

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture? There was

☐ Yes

☐ No

☒ Not Sure

Comments:

India is more than what is shown. The "culture" trying to be portrayed just adds more to the pre conceived notion about India.

There was very little to do with culture in this piece. It had more to do with traditional clothing.

Sohni Mahiwal Preserving South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age:

Sex:

Nationality:

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Did you fully understand the story?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Did the music compliment the animation?

Yes

No

Not Sure

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

Ok

Too fast

Too Slow

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well?

Yes

No

Not Sure

How entertaining was it from 1-10 ?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Would a voiceover or subtitles have helped the storytelling?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture?

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

I love the style but I think ~~it~~ it should have been faster.

Sohni Mahiwal Preserving South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age: Sex: Nationality:
USA

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

☒ Yes No Not Sure

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

☒ Yes No Not Sure

← especially the red, the texture makes it feel like a story on a book

Did you fully understand the story?

☒ Yes No Not Sure

Did the music compliment the animation?

☒ Yes No Not Sure

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

☒ Ok Too fast Too Slow

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well? + 2017 digital media illustration animation

☒ Yes No Not Sure

→ Reminds me of Duolingo's forms of people

How entertaining was it from 1-10?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ☒ 10

Would a voiceover or subtitles have helped the storytelling?

☒ Yes No Not Sure

← I don't think it's needed.

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

☒ Yes No Not Sure

→ scallers

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture?

Yes No Not Sure

Comments: Belladonna of Sindhers

Sohni Mahiwal Preserving South Asian cultural heritage through animated storytelling

Age: 23 Sex: F Nationality: Dominican

Did you find the art style of the animation appealing?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do the colours compliment the mood of the story?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did you fully understand the story?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Did the music compliment the animation?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

What are your thoughts about the animation speed?

☐ Ok ☐ Too fast ☒ Too Slow

Do you feel the visuals represented the South Asian location and culture well?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

How entertaining was it from 1-10 ?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ☒ 10

Would a voiceover or subtitles have helped the storytelling?

☐ Yes ☒ No ☐ Not Sure

Did the typography/font used in the animation go with the theme?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Do you think such folk tales would be a good way for young kids to learn about their culture?

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Comments:

is very powerful message! The music really compliments the story, the style is very appealing and is slow but just a little bit, I like that you give time to process the info. Really good job!!

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